

## Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for routing hardcopy mail, comprising:

providing a unique identifier for a recipient, in response to entry of a mailing address of ~~a~~ the recipient in a routing system;

electronically associating the mailing address, provided by the recipient, with the identifier in the routing system, the mailing address comprising all information necessary for routing the hardcopy mail to a physical location of the recipient;

providing the identifier to a sender for affixing to a piece of hardcopy mail in lieu of the mailing address in response to a search by the sender for the identifier in the routing system;

retrieving the associated mailing address corresponding to the identifier from a referencing system of the routing system by a postal machine, the retrieving using only the identifier; and

routing the piece of hardcopy mail to the recipient at the most current associated mailing address, wherein the retrieving obviates a request to a computer.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising electronically editing the associated mailing address.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the piece of hardcopy mail is routed to the recipient at the edited mailing address.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the identifier is a machine readable code.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the machine readable code is a bar code.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of sending the associated mailing address to the postal machine for routing the piece of hardcopy mail, prior to the routing step.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the associated mailing address is sent in response to a request by the machine, and wherein the request includes an identifier value corresponding to the identifier.

8. (Currently Amended) A method for routing hardcopy mail, comprising:

providing a unique identifier for a recipient<sub>i</sub>, in response to entry of a mailing address of ~~a~~ the recipient in a routing system;

electronically associating the mailing address, provided by the recipient, with the identifier in the routing system, the mailing address comprising all information necessary for routing the hardcopy mail to a physical location of the recipient;

providing the identifier to a sender for affixing to a piece of hardcopy mail in lieu of the mailing address and submitting the piece of hardcopy mail to a machine, ~~where~~ wherein the providing is in response to a search by the sender for the identifier in the routing system; and

retrieving the mailing address corresponding to the identifier from a referencing

system of the routing system to the machine, using only the identifier; and

providing the most current mailing address to the machine, wherein the machine can read the identifier and route the piece of hardcopy mail to the recipient at the associated mailing address and wherein the retrieving obviates a request to a computer.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the identifier is a machine readable code.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the machine readable code is a bar code.

11. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the mailing address is a physical postal address.

12. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the machine is a postal machine.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of electronically editing the associated mailing address and electronically associating the edited mailing address with the identifier, prior to retrieving the most current mailing address.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein the most current mailing address is the edited mailing address.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the request includes an

identifier value corresponding to the identifier.

16. (Currently Amended) A method for routing hardcopy mail, comprising:

providing a unique identifier for a recipient<sub>2</sub> in response to entry of a mailing address of ~~a~~ the recipient in a routing system;

electronically associating the mailing address, provided by the recipient, with the identifier in the routing system, the mailing address comprising all information necessary for routing the hardcopy mail to a location of the recipient;

providing the identifier to a sender for affixing to a piece of hardcopy mail in lieu of the mailing address in response to a search by the sender for the identifier in the routing system;

electronically editing the associated mailing address;

electronically associating the edited mailing address with the identifier; and

sending the edited mailing address to a machine through a referencing system of the routing system by retrieving the edited mailing address using only the identifier, wherein the machine can read the identifier and route the piece of hardcopy mail to the recipient at the edited mailing address and wherein the retrieving obviates a request to a computer.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the identifier is a machine readable code.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the machine readable code is a bar code.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the edited mailing address is sent in response to a request by the machine, and wherein the request includes an identifier value corresponding to the identifier.

20. (Previously Presented) A system for routing hardcopy mail, comprising:

a recipient interface for electronically associating a mailing address, provided by a recipient, with a unique identifier for the recipient in a routing system, the mailing address comprising all information necessary for routing the hardcopy mail to a location of the recipient;

a sender interface for outputting the identifier to a sender in response to a search by the sender for the identifier in the routing system, wherein the identifier is affixable to a piece of hardcopy mail in lieu of the mailing address;

a cross-reference system for retrieving the associated mailing address using only the identifier; and

a routing system for outputting the associated mailing address to a machine for the mailing address corresponding to the identifier, the machine routing the piece of hardcopy mail to the recipient at the associated mailing address, wherein the machine can read the identifier and route the piece of hardcopy mail to the recipient at the associated mailing address and wherein the retrieving obviates a request to a computer.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the mailing address is a physical postal address.

22. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the machine is a postal machine.

23. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the unique identifier is a machine readable code.

24. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the machine readable code is a bar code.

25. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 20, wherein the recipient interface allows the associated mailing address to be edited and electronically associated with the identifier.

26. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 25, wherein the cross-reference system retrieves an edited mailing address and the routing system outputs the edited mailing address to the machine, wherein the machine can read the identifier and route the piece of hardcopy mail to the recipient at the edited address.

27. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 20, wherein the associated mailing address is outputted in response to a request that includes an identifier value corresponding to the identifier.

28. (Previously Presented) A system for routing hardcopy mail, comprising:  
a recipient interface for electronically designating a mailing address for a recipient in a routing system, provided by the recipient, the mailing address comprising

all information necessary for routing the hardcopy mail to a location of the recipient;

a sender interface for outputting a unique identifier corresponding to the recipient to a sender in response to a search by the sender for the identifier in the routing system, wherein the identifier is affixable to a piece of hardcopy mail in lieu of the mailing address;

a cross-reference system for retrieving the designated mailing address using only the identifier; and

a routing system for outputting the designated mailing address to a machine in response to a request from the machine for the designated mailing address corresponding to the identifier, wherein the machine reads the identifier and routes the corresponding piece of hardcopy mail to the recipient at the designated mailing address and wherein the retrieving obviates a request to a computer.

29. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the request includes a value corresponding to the identifier.

30. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the address is a physical postal address.

31. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the machine is a postal machine.

32. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the identifier is a machine readable code.

33. (Previously Presented) A program product stored on a computer usable medium for

routing hardcopy mail, the computer useable medium comprising program code for causing a computer system to perform the following steps:

electronically associating a mailing address, provided by a recipient, with a unique identifier for the recipient, the mailing address comprising all information necessary for routing the hardcopy mail to a location of the recipient;

outputting the identifier to a sender in response to a search by the sender for the identifier in the routing system, wherein the identifier is affixable to a piece of hardcopy mail in lieu of the mailing address; and

retrieving from the routing system the associated mailing address using only the identifier; and

outputting the associated mailing address from a referencing system of the routing system to a machine associated to a referencing system, wherein the machine can read the identifier and route the piece of hardcopy mail to the recipient at the associated mailing address and wherein the retrieving obviates a request to a computer.

34. (Previously Presented) The program product of claim 33, wherein the associated mailing address is outputted in response to a request that includes an identifier value corresponding to the identifier.